

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the subject application as follows:

In the Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A rack for use in a compound handling system for handling a multiplicity of tubes containing aliquots of chemical or biological samples, which comprises:

a single piece frame, said frame having a top side and a bottom side;

storage compartments within said frame that are each configured and dimensioned to receive a sample tube containing a chemical or biological sample, said storage compartments being adjacent to each other and defined by separation walls between them, each of said storage compartments having an inner wall and being open at the top side of the frame and open at the bottom side of the frame so that a sample tube is insertable into the storage compartment from ~~either both~~ the top side of the frame ~~or~~ and the bottom side of the frame and is removable from the storage compartment from either the top side of the frame or the bottom side of the frame with one and the same orientation of the sample tube with respect to the frame; and

means for retaining a sample tube within each of said storage compartments, said retaining means ~~being an integral part of said frame, said retaining means being a part of the inner wall of each storage compartment, that part of said inner wall being configured and dimensioned to cooperate with a part of the outer wall of a sample tube for retaining the sample tube at a predetermined position within said compartment~~ comprising a projection of the inner surface of the wall of each storage compartment, said projection being suitable for snapping between two ridges of the of the outer wall of a sample tube that is positioned within the storage compartment

2. (Currently amended) A rack according to claim 1, wherein each of said compartments is ~~configured and dimensioned~~ suitable for receiving and holding an entire sample tube.

Serial No. 09/741,542
Filed: December 20, 2000

3. (Original) A rack according to claim 1, wherein each of said storage compartment is rectangular.

4. (Currently amended) A rack according to claim 1, wherein said means for retaining a sample tube comprise a projection of the inner surface of the wall of each storage compartment ~~that~~ is configured and dimensioned so as to bias against a sample tube that ~~has been~~ is positioned within with the storage compartment.

5. (Canceled)